INTRODUCTION

We have previously described the training of medics, their system of clinics, and the difficult conditions under which they work. Using an early, small group of patients seen by IMC medics, we have found their diagnostic accuracy to be acceptable in the field. We now present a series of patients seen by IMC medics in rural Afghanistan. A small bibliography pertaining to disease in Afghanistan is included.

This edited version is presented for use of PVO's and others interested in the Afghan problem. A more complete version is being prepared for publication. The authors respectfully request that anyone using this data agree not to reprint it in any form, pending copyright approval.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

All Medics were trained at the IMC facility outside Peshawar, Pakistan. Upon entering Afghanistan, medics recorded all patients seen. Nonsurgical patients were recorded in logbooks obtained from the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. Name, age, sex, diagnosis and treatment were recorded. All trauma and surgical patients were recorded in a separate book designed by one of the authors (JHS). Trauma patients are included in this paper for completeness but will be analyzed in detail elsewhere.

Forty-two clinics are in operation as of this writing; however, instabilities in rural Afghanistan preclude complete, regular retrieval of logbooks. As students return to Pakistan, books are translated and tabulated under the supervision of an Afghan physician on the IMC staff (QN). Results are then returned to the U.S. for analysis.

Results from 20 clinics, recorded between August 1986 and March 1987, were obtained. Of these, 10 sets of data were complete. These were combined to give an idea of disease patterns. 21,893 patients are represented from 6 provinces within Afghanistan. For each patient, only the principal diagnosis has been recorded.

able I shows the distribution of patients by province. Not all clinics in each province are represented. The dates of data collection are not necessarily consecutive. Each logbook represents the work of a single medic or group of medics. Books may overlap chronologically or be separated by a 1-3 month interval.

Table II shows the age and sex distribution of patients. Afghans have an inexact sense of time and do not record birthdates. Age estimates are made from historical events but are less accurate with increasing age.

Table III is a detailed grouping of patients by disease categories, while Table IV lists the most common diagnoses.

For all tables, incidence is presented as a percentage of all patients seen in the 10 combined clinics.

TABLE I.
DISTRIBUTION BY PROVINCE

PROVINCE	#CLINICS	#PATIENTS	(%)	DATES OF DATA COLLECTION
PAKTIA	3	7608	(34.8)	NOV. 86 - MAR. 87
WARDAK	2	5843	(26.7)	DEC. 86 - MAR. 87
LOGAR	1	3306	(15.1)	JAN. 87 - MAR. 87
MAIDAN	1	3211	(14.7)	JAN. 87 - MAR. 87
HERAT	2	1060	(4.8)	AUG. 86 - MAR. 87
JAUZJAN	1	865	(4.0)	OCT. 86 - JAN. 87
TOTALS	10	21,893	(100.1)	

TABLE II.
DISTRIBUTION BY AGE, SEX

AGE	NUMBER	(%)
0-09	5649	(25.2)
10-19	3628	(16.2)
20-29	4506	(20.1)
30-39	3427	(15.3)
40-40	2618	(11.7)
50-50	1273	(5.7)
60-69	849	(3.8)
70-70	295	(1.3)
80-89	92	(0.4)
90+	39	(0.2)
TOTAL	22,376	(99.9)

SEX	NUMBER	%
MALE	16,270	(71.6)
FEMALE	6,445	(28.4)
TOTAL	22,715	(100.0)

TABLE III.
CATEGORIES OF DISEASE

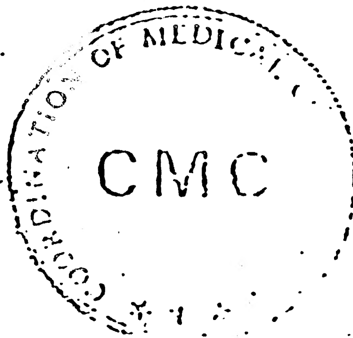
		NUMBER	(%)
A.	GASTROINTESTINAL	4895	(22.4)
	HYPERACIDITY/GASTRITIS	1407	(6.4)
	PARASITES	1269	(5.8)
	DYSENTERY	669	(3.1)
	OTHER DIARRHEA	633	(2.9)
	ABDOMINAL PAIN	388	(1.8)
	CONSTIPATION	259	(1.2)
	GASTROENTERITIS	143	(0.7)
	OTHER (HEMORRHOID, HEPATITIS)	127	(0.6)
B.	PULMONARY	3961	(18.1)
	BRONCHITIS	1931	(8.8)
	PNEUMONIA	767	(3.5)
	ASTHMA	449	(2.1)
	TUBERCULOSIS (suspected)	184	(0.8)
	DIPHTHERIA	55	(0.3)
	PERTUSSIS	42	(0.2)
	OTHER COUGH	533	(2.4)
C.	EAR/NOSE/THROAT	3103	(14.2)
	COLD	1170	(5.3)
	RHINOPHARYNGITIS/TONSILITIS	711	(3.2)
	OTITIS MEDIA	465	(2.1)
	SINUSITIS	225	(1.0)
	OTITIS EXTERNIA	215	(1.0)
	DENTAL (INCLUDES GINGIVITIS)	147	(0.7)
	OTHER (STOMATITIS, LARYNGITIS)	170	(0.8)
D.	MUSCULOSKELETAL	2557	(11.7)
	ARTHRITIS/ARTHRALGIA	1107	(5.1)
	"PAIN ALL OVER BODY"	922	(4.2)
	BACK PAIN/SCIATICA	528	(2.4)
E.	GENERAL DEFICIENCY	1915	(8.7)
	HEADACHE	859	(3.9)
	ANEMIA	348	(1.6)
	FATIGUE/WEAKNESS	248	(1.1)
	MALNUTRITION	210	(1.0)
	DEHYDRATION/HYPERTENSION	170	(0.8)
	OTHER (THYROID, SCURVY)	80	(0.4)

ABLE III (CONT.)

F.	INFECTIOUS	1463	(6.7)
	MEASLES	642	(2.9)
	MALARIA	318	(1.5)
	UNDIAGNOSED FEVER	280	(1.3)
	TYPHOID	144	(0.7)
	OTHER (MENINGITIS, MUMPS)	79	(0.4)
G.	DERMATOLOGIC	1003	(4.6)
	IMPETIGO	332	(1.5)
	ALLERGIC DERMATITIS/PRURITIS	215	(1.0)
	OTHER INFECTION	199	(0.9)
	SCABIES	142	(0.6)
	OTHER (ECZEMA, FUNGUS)	115	(0.5)
H.	GENITOURINARY	904	(4.1)
	URINARY INFECTION (CYCTITIS)	296	(1.4)
	URETHRITIS	293	(1.3)
	"KIDNEY PAIN"/URINARY LITHIASIS	164	(0.7)
	OBSTETRIC/GYNECOLOGICAL	114	(0.5)
	OTHER (PROSTATITIS, ORCHITIS)	37	(0.2)
I.	OTHER		
	TRAUMA	768	(3.5)
	OPHTHALMOLOGIC	749	(3.4)
	CARDIOVASCULAR	421	(1.9)
	NERVOUS/PSYCHIATRIC	154	(0.7)

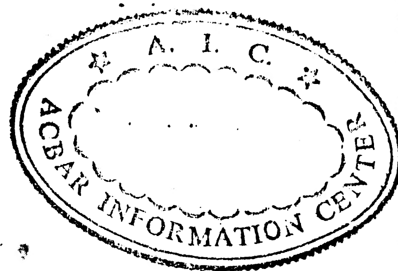
TABLE IV.
MOST COMMON DIAGNOSES

DIAGNOSIS		NUMBER	%
1.	BRONCHITIS	1931	(8.8)
2.	HYPERACIDITY/GASTRITIS	1407	(6.4)
3.	DIARRHEA	1302	(5.9)
4.	PARASITOSIS	1269	(5.8)
5.	COLD	1170	(5.1)
6.	ARTHRITIS/ARTHRALGIA	1107	(5.3)
7.	"PAIN ALL OVER BODY"	922	(4.2)
8.	HEADACHE	859	(3.9)
9	TRAUMA	768	(3.5)
10.	PNEUMONIA	767	(3.5)
		11,502	(52.5)



4 PATTERN OF DISEASE IN RURAL AFGHANISTAN.

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